

TITLE: Joseph Cinquez, the brave Congolese Chief, who prefers death to slavery, and who now lies in jail . . .

Joseph Cinquez was the leader of a revolt among African slaves aboard the Spanish ship "Amistad" en route to Cuba in June 1839. The slaves seized control of the ship but were soon recaptured and charged with murder and piracy. This portrait was done while Cinquez (or "Cinque") awaited trial in New Haven, Connecticut. John Quincy Adams represented the Africans before the Supreme Court, and thanks to his eloquence, they were set free and allowed to return to Africa. Sheffield's portrait is sympathetic and informal. The text quotes Cinquez's sober and moving speech to his comrades on board ship after the mutiny. He said, "Brothers, we have done that which we purposed, our hands are now clean for we have Striven to regain the precious heritage we received from our fathers. . . . I am resolved it is better to die than to be a white man's slave . . ." Commissioned by the publisher of the New York "Sun," the print was described and advertised for sale in the account of the capture of the "Amistad," published in that newspaper's August 31, 1839 issue. (The "Sun" account, evidently erroneous in this detail, names the artist as "James" Sheffield.) The Library's impression of the lithograph was deposited for copyright the same day.

Deposited in the Clerk's Office for the
Southern District of New York August 31 1839

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JOSEPH CINQUEZ.

The brave Congolese Chief, who prefers death to Slavery, and who now lies in Jail in Irons at New Haven Conn. awaiting his trial for daring for freedom.

SPEECH TO HIS COMRADE SLAVES AFTER MURDERING THE CAPTAIN & C. AND GETTING POSSESSION OF THE VESSEL AND CARGO

Brothers, we have done that which we purposed, our hands are now clean, for we have Striven to regain the precious heritage we received from our fathers. We have only to persevere, Where the Sun rises there is our home, our brethren, our fathers. Do not seek to defeat my orders, if so I shall sacrifice any one who would endanger the rest. when at home we will kill the Old Man, the young one shall be saved he is kind and gave you bread, we must not kill those who give us water.

Brothers, I am resolved that it is better to die than be a white man's slave, and I will not complain if by dying I save you. Let us be careful what we eat, that we may not be sick. The deed is done and I need say no more.